

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00 ACDA-19

EUR-25 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 /151 W
----- 129133

R 170930Z JAN 74

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3404

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 0254

DEPT PASS DAMASCUS

FROM STERNER MEPC DEL

E.O.11652 GDS

TAGS PFOR

SUBJ SYRIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE

1. AFTER SEVERAL POSTPONEMENTS, I MADE COURTESY CALL ON SYRIAN CHARGE ALLAF JAN 16. I TOLD HIM I HAD NO SPECIAL BUSINESS TO CONDUCT AND MY ONLY PURPOSE ON THIS OCCASION WAS TO GET ACQUAINTED.

2. ALLAF WAS CORDIAL AND TALKATIVE BUT SAID NOTHING TO INDICATE HIS GOVERNMENT HAD REACHED ANY DEFINITE DECISIONS ON QUESTION OF SYRIAN PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA CONFERENCE. ALTHOUGH CAREFUL NOT TO COMMIT HIMSELF, HE LEFT IMPRESSION SYRIA WOULD DEFINITELY NOT JOINT GENEVA TALKS UNTIL EGYPT-ISRAEL DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT WAS COMPLETED. EVEN THEN, HE INDICATED, SYRIA'S ATTITUDE ABOUT PARTICIPATION WOULD DEPEND ON HOW NEXT STAGE OF GENEVA TALKS UNFOLDED. SYRIA BELIEVED GENEVA CONFERENCE HAD

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BEEN CONVENED TO IMPLEMENT RES. 242 AND SHOULD NOT GET BOGGED

DOWN, AS IT ALREADY HAD IN HIS VIEW, WITH "MINOR PROBLEM" OF
DISENGAGEMENT WHICH WAS PART OF CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT. WHEN IT
WAS CLEAR GENEVA CONFERENCE WAS READY TO GET DOWN TO THIS MAIN
TASK, SYRIA WOULD BE HAPPY TO JOIN.

3. ALLAF STRESSED SUSPICION WITH WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT VIEWED
PIECEMEAL APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS. THIS ONLY SERVED ISRAEL'S
PURPOSES OF DIVIDING ARABS AND MAKING IT EASIER FOR ISRAEL TO
FREEZE SITUATION AT SOME STAGE SHORT OF FULL WITHDRAWAL. ALTHOUGH
AVOIDING DIRECT CRITICISM OF EGYPT, DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
DAMASCUS AND CAIRO IN THEIR APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS CAME
THROUGH STRONGLY.

4. ALLAF ASKED ME HOW CONFERENCE MIGHT ORGANIZE ITS NEXT STAGE
(I.E. POST EGYPT-ISRAEL DISENGAGEMENT). I SAID I DID NOT KNOW
BUT I THOUGH DISSIMILARITY OF SITUATIONS AND ISSUES ON VARIOUS
FRONTS MIGHT CONTINUE TO MAKE BILATERAL WORKING GROUP APPROACH
MOST PRACTICAL WAY TO PROCEED, ALTHOUGH TWO OR MORE OF THESE
TRACKS MIGHT WELL BE ACTIVE SIMULTANEOUSLY. ALLAF SAID HE THOUGHT
"ALL THESE PROBLEMS" WERE INTERRELATED AND OUGHT TO BE TAKEN UP
IN ONE FORUM AT THE CONFERENCE.

5. ALTHOUGH CLEARLY BEARISH ON SUBJECT OF NEGOTIATIONS, ALLAF
EXPLICITLY REITERATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT SYRIA "NOW ACCEPTS"
S.C. RES. 242 AS BASIS FOR PEACE SETTLEMENT.BASSIN

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED DAMASCUS.

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